CORNELIUS: The Barber of Baghdad WEBER: Abu Hassan



Elisabeth Schwarzkopf • Nicolai Gedda Oskar Czerwenka • Grace Hoffman • Hermann Prey Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra Erich Leinsdorf



Great Opera Recordings

Peter CORNELIUS

(1824 - 1874)

The Barber of Baghdad

(Der Barbier von Bagdad)

Opera in Two Acts • Libretto by the Composer

Abul Hassan, the Barber	Oskar Czerwenka (bass)
Baba Mustapha, the Cadi	Gerhard Unger (tenor)
Margiana, his daughter	Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano)
Bostana, his maid-servant	Grace Hoffman (contralto)
Nureddin, in love with Margiana	Nicolai Gedda (tenor)
1st Muezzin	Eberhard Wächter (baritone)
2nd Muezzin	August Jaresch (tenor)
3rd Muezzin	Rudolf Christ (tenor)
The Caliph of Baghdad	Hermann Prey (baritone)

Philharmonia Chorus (Chorus Master: Walter Jellinek)
Philharmonia Orchestra
Erich Leinsdorf

Recorded 11th-12th and 14th-15th May, 1956, in the Town Hall, Watford and in EMI Abbey Road Studio No. 1, London First issued on Columbia 33CX 1400 and 1401

Reissue Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn Special thanks to Maynard F. Bertolet for providing source material

CL) 1	78:26		Act 2	
			14	Introduction	2:49
1	Overture	7:25		(Orchestra)	
	(Orchestra)		15	Er kommt! Er kommt! Er kommt!	
				O Wonne meiner Brust!	5:29
	Act 1			(Margiana, Bostana, Cadi)	
2	Sanfter Schlummer	5:05	16	Allah ist gross, und Mahomet sein Prophet	2:43
	(Servants, Nureddin)			(First, Second and Third Muezzin,	
3	So leb' ich noch! So hat noch nicht	4:55		Margiana, Bostana, Cadi)	
	(Nureddin)		17	O holdes Bild in Engelschöne	5:39
4	Sei Allahs Frieden über dir, mein Sohn	1:54		(Nureddin, Margiana)	
	(Bostana, Nureddin)		18	O Nureddin! Geniesse froh dein Glück	5:07
5	Wenn zum Gebet	3:50		(Abul, Bostana, Nureddin, Margiana,	
	(Bostana, Nureddin)			a Slave, Voices)	
6	Ach, das Leid hab' ich getragen	3:19	19	Unsel'ger Freund! Und musstest so du enden.	4:13
	(Nureddin)			(Abul, Cadi, Servants, Cadi's Friends,	
7	Mein Sohn, sei Allahs Frieden hier	4:12		Mourning Women, People of Baghdad,	
	(Abul, Nureddin)			Four Officers)	
8	Bin Akademiker	2:46			
	(Abul, Nureddin)		CD	2	57:18
9	He! Ali, Sadi, Abbas, Achmet	5:01			
	(Nureddin, Servants, Abul)			Act 2 (conclusion)	
10	"Lass dir zu Füssen wonnesam mich lieg	en,	1	Sprich,Kadi,dubistHerrindeinemHause	5:16
	o Margiana!"	3:46		(Caliph, Cadi, Abul, All, Margiana)	
	(Abul, Nureddin)		2	He, Mustapha! Freund Mustapha, wach auf!	5:55
11	Mein teurer Abul, deiner Stimme Klang	3:53		(Cadi, Caliph, Abul, Margiana, Bostana,	
	(Nureddin, Abul)			Chorus, Nureddin)	
12	So schwärmet Jugend, achtet nicht Gefah	r 2:41	3	Heil diesem Hause, den du trat'st ein,	
	(Abul)			Salam aleikum!	1:57
13	So hat der Satan dich noch immer hier?	3:40		(Abul, All)	
	(Nureddin, Abul, Servants)		4	Alternate Overture in D major (orch. Liszt	7:13
				(Orchestra)	
				(

Carl Maria von WEBER

(1786 - 1826)

Abu Hassan

Opera in One Act • Libretto by Franz Karl Hiemer

Fatime	Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (soprano)
Abu Hassan	Erich Witte (tenor)
Omar	Michael Bohnen (bass)

Berlin Radio Symphony Chorus and Orchestra Leopold Ludwig

Recorded 19th December, 1944, in Berlin First issued on Urania 7029

Reissue Producer and Audio Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn

5	Overture	3:24	11 Siehst du diese grosse Menge	4:12
	(Orchestra)		(Fatime, Omar)	
6	Liebes Weibchen, reiche Wein	2:27	12 Ich such' und such' in allen Blicken	2:51
	(Abu, Fatime)		(Fatime, Abu, Omar)	
7	Was nun zu machen*	5:23	13 Hier liegt, welch' martervolles Los	2:33
	(Abu)		(Fatime)	
8	Geld! Geld! Geld!	2:41	14 Angstlich klopft es mir im Herzen	3:18
	(Chorus, Abu, Omar)		(Fatime, Abu, Omar, Chorus)	
9	Tränen sollst du nicht vergiessen	5:54	15 Heil ist dem Haus beschieden	0:45
	(Fatime, Abu)		(Chorus)	
10	Wird Philomena trauern*	3:30		
	(Fatime)		*The performing libretto differs from the original text	
			in these numbers	

Producer's Note

The Barber of Baghdad was transferred from German LP pressings. Abu Hassan was originally recorded by German radio on a Magnetophon tape recorder, and like many early tapes, it suffers from harshness and distortion in louder passages which cannot be completely remedied. The Overture was apparently recorded at a different session than the rest of the opera, which is presented complete except for the spoken dialogue. An American LP pressing was the source for this transfer, and each track was carefully re-pitched to correct inaccuracies in earlier editions.

Mark Obert-Thorn

Peter Cornelius (1824-1874): Der Barbier von Bagdad Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826): Abu Hassan

The composer Peter Cornelius was born in Mainz on 24th December 1824 into a theatrical family. His father died when the boy was quite young and he went to live with his uncle Peter von Cornelius. He began his career as an actor, and then studied composition with Siegfried Dehn in Berlin. In 1852 he became associated with the "The Music of the Future", also known as the "New German School", following his visit to Liszt in 1842, culminating in his keen championship of both Liszt and Wagner. In his early life Cornelius was particularly interested in literature, the seeds of which manifested themselves in his later prolific output of criticism. He wrote a large number of songs, the best known being the charming and delightful Weinachtslieder. Cornelius also wrote three operas, Der Barbier von Bagdad (1858), Der Cid (1865) and Gunold, the last completed in 1891 following his death in 1874.

The libretto for *Der Barbier von Bagdad* was written by the composer, who in turn based it on a story from *The Arabian Nights*. Originally the composer planned his new work to encompass a single act, with the extended finale comprising almost a third of the entire composition. Subsequently he was advised to divide the opera into two acts of roughly equal length. The comedy is set in Baghdad and concerns Nureddin (tenor), who is very much in love with Margiana (soprano), the daughter of the Caliph Mustapha (tenor). The other two main characters are the 'fixer' Bostana (mezzo-soprano) and the hero, the mischievous Abul Hassan Ali Ebn Bekar. The various twist and turns provide us with a deliability sparkling German comedy

The opera had its was première in Weimar on 15th December 1858, the conductor being Franz Liszt, the theatre's music director. The occasion was a complete fiasco, caused by the feud between the conductor and the manager of the theatre, Dingelstedt. The members of the audience who supported each of the parties made mayhem. Additionally, the public took against the concept of the "New German School". The work was not heard again in the composer's own lifetime, and its revival in Hanover in 1877, when the German conductor

Felix Mottl revised and re-orchestrated the opera, was another failure. Following the first performance Liszt suggested to Cornelius that he write a new overture to replace the brief prelude but as the composer died before he was able to make an orchestration, this was undertaken posthumously by Liszt. This new overture uses music heard later in the opera and was for a production directed by the conductor Hermann Levi in Karlsruhe in 1885, when the occasion proved a success. Further productions ensued worldwide. It is the original version which is used for this recording.

When this recording was released in November 1957 the reviewer in *The Gramophone* remarked that "there is no mistaking the enjoyment which the present cast find in the work – an enjoyment seemingly shared by the orchestra and the chorus". He continued: "Outstanding in this company is Oscar Czerwenka, who very obviously relished the verbal humour in his part and gives a splendid comic performance". He also made mentioned that "Nicolai Gedda is on his best form, and Schwarzkopf brings distinction to [her] part". Grace Hoffmann was praised for "fine voice which ... has an easy flexibility too"

The choice of conductor Erich Leinsdorf was an interesting one in that it was the one occasion that producer Walter Legge used his services. The Vienneseborn naturalised American musician was at this time under contract to EMI's American arm Capitol Records. In the case of Schwarzkopf she learnt her part especially for this recording. As Alan Sanders in his excellent Elizabeth Schwarzkopf – A Career on Record (Duckworth, 1995) has written: "The score as a whole was new to her, and at the time of the recording she was not in good health and had to husband her resources as best she could. The music presented her with problems too, since she found it was awkwardly written for the voice".

The reason for this recording not being made in stereo was due to the non-availability of such technical equipment. At this time EMI possessed two sets of stereo recording gear, one *in situ* in their Abbey Road

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Studios, the other at Kingsway Hall, these two locations being the prime venues for large classical projects. Furthermore, Beecham was using the latter venue for his recording of Mozart's *Die Entstihrung aus dem Serai*l. Thus the use of Watford Town Hall meant that as EMI then did not possess mobile stereo equipment the recording had to be made in mono only.

Carl Maria von Weber also based his delightful oneact Singspiel on The Arabian Nights to a libretto by
Franz Karl Heimer, which they called Abu Hassan. The
work was given its première in Munich on 4th June
1811, the score being published the following year. The
story concerns itself with problems of the two lovers,
Abu Hassan and his wife Fatime, paying off their debts.
After a series of aborted attempts to claim money by
false pretences, all is forgiven and resolved by the end.
"Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Erich Witte are a very
melodious pair of lovers, Michael Bohnen revels in his
buffo part, and Leopold Ludwig keeps the little opera
moving briskly", wrote The Gramophone reviewer in
July 1961.

The German soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (1915-2006) studied at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik and later with the soprano Maris Ivogün, making her début as one of the Flowermaidens in Parsifal with the Städtische Oper, Berlin in 1938. Originally a lyrical soprano she undertook rôles such as Adele in Die Fledermaus, Musetta in La Bohème and Zerbinetta in Ariadne auf Naxos when she joined the Vienna State Opera under Karl Bohm in 1943. Her first overseas appearance was with this company on their visit to London in 1947, when she sang Donna Elvira, and Marzelline in Fidelio. She then joined the fledgling Covent Garden Company, where for five seasons she sang a variety of rôles, mostly in English, Alongside these appearances, Schwarzkopf sang at the Salzburg Festival (1946-1964), La Scala, Milan (1948-1963), San Francisco (1955-1964) and, finally, the Metropolitan in New York in 1964. She was greatly admired in the rôles of the Marschallin, Fiordiligi, the Countess in Le nozze di Figaro and Donna Elvira. She also had a distinguished parallel career as a Lieder singer in the concert hall. She was the wife of producer Walter Legge. whom she married in 1953

Nicolai Gedda (b.1925) is one of the most respected lyric tenors of the twentieth century and unquestionably the most versatile. Born in Stockholm, his father was a Russian who sang in the Don Cossack Choir: after a brief interval in Leipzig, where the family went when his father was appointed cantor with the Orthodox Church, they returned to Stockholm in 1934. There it was that young Nicolai discovered his voice and began his studies with a distinguished teacher. Carl Martin Ohmann, at the Swedish Royal Academy of Music. He made his début in 1951 at the Royal Opera in Stockholm in the première of Sutermeister's Der rote Stiefe, followed by the altitudinous tenor rôle of Chapelou in Adam's Le Postillon de Longiumeau in April 1952. After taking part in the first Western recording of Boris Godunov under Dobrowen (Naxos 8.110242-44), Gedda made his La Scala début in 1953 as Don Ottavio and as the Groom in the première of Orff's Il trionfo di Afrodite. The following years saw him appear at the Paris Opéra (Huon in *Oberon*), the Aix-en-Provence Festival. Covent Garden (the Duke in Rigoletto), Salzburg Festival (Belmonte in *Die Entführung*) and the Metropolitan in New York as Gounod's Faust. In 1958 he created the rôle of Anatol in Barber's Vanessa, which he also gave in Salzburg. He first sang Berlioz's Benvenuto Cellini at the Holland Festival in 1961, which he later repeated at Covent Garden in 1966, 1969 and 1976. He also appeared in Russia in 1980-81 to great acclaim. His London concert hall début took place in 1986. He sang at the Met for 22 seasons in 27 rôles in 289 performances. He was still recording as recently as 2002. Gedda has proved the most versatile lyric tenor of his time with a vast discography covering every conceivable aspect of the repertory. His career over fifty years took him to pretty well all the leading opera houses throughout Europe and America, and he sang a vast repertory in pretty well every language, in operas such as Oberon, Don Giovanni, Boris Godunov, La sonnambula, Die Entführung aus dem Serail, I vespri siciliani, L'elisir d'amore, Mireille, La traviata, I Puritani, Faust, among many others. Even in the 21st century, at Covent Garden, he was still singing and in for him a new rôle, the Archbishop in Pfitzner's Palestrina.

Baritone Hermann Prey (1929–1998) was born in

Berlin studying at the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin and in 1952 he was a prizewinner of Hessischer Rundfunk in Frankfurt Later that year he made his début as the Second Prisoner in Fidelio in Wiesbaden followed by Monuccio in d'Albert's Tiefland, Prey soon joined the Hamburg State Opera (1953-1960) and in 1957 sang in Vienna, followed two years later by appearances in Munich. Between 1960 and 1970 in six seasons Prev appeared at the Metropolitan in New York, making his début as Wolfram. In 1965 he first sang at Bavreuth, again as Wolfram, returning as a percentive Beckmesser in 1981. In 1973 Prev sang Rossini's Barbiere at Covent Garden and subsequently reappeared as Guglielmo. Papageno and Eisenstein. Although he had sung Verdi parts in his early years, he later concentrated on Mozart and Strauss, singing Olivier (Hamburg 1957), Harlequin (Munich 1960). and Robert Storch (Munich 1960). In 1997 he returned to the Salzburg Festival as Der Sprecher in Die Zauberflöte. In 1988 he directed a production of Le nozze di Figaro at Salzburg. He was also one of the founders of a Schubert Festival in Austria. Prev died in Munich in November 1998

The American mezzo-soprano Grace Hoffman was born in Cleveland Ohio in 1925 and was educated at Western Reserve University in her native city. Then she studied voice with Friedrich Schorr in New York and Mario Basiola in Milan. After her stage début in the United States as Lola in Cavalleria rusticana, she sang in Florence (1951) and Zürich (1953-55) before becoming a member of the Württemberg State Theatre in Stuttgart in 1955. In March 1958 she made her Metropolitan Opera début in New York as Brangane in Tristan und Isolde. She also appeared at La Scala in Milan, Covent Garden in London (regularly between 1959 and 1971), Bayreuth (1957-70), and the Vienna State Opera. In 1978 Grace Hoffman became professor of voice at the Hochschule für Musik in Stuttgart. She was noted for her performances of the music of Wagner and Verdi, particularly for her rôles of Brangane. Kundry, and Eboli. She also sang extensively in the concert hall

Linz-born bass **Oskar Czerwenka** (1924-2000) initially wanted to become a painter, but then undertook

singing lessons with Otto Iro in Vienna. In 1947 he made his début as the Hermit in Weber's Der Freischütz at the Stadttheater in Graz. Four years later he became a member of the Vienna State Opera, where he remained for 35 years until retiring in 1986. Czerwenka also appeared regularly at the Vienna Volksoper. He was particularly admired in *buffo* bass rôles such as Ochs. Kecal. Osmin or van Bett, but his repertory comprised more than 75 opera rôles. From 1953 onwards he sang at the Salzburg Festival where he appeared as the Notary in Der Rosenkavalier. Truffaldino in Ariadne auf Naxos, and Bartolo in Le nozze di Figaro, with the world premières of Einem's Kafka opera Der Prozess and Egk's Irische Legende. Czerwenka also appeared throughout Germany and in Lisbon, Prague, Budapest, Zurich, Brussels and the festivals of Glyndebourne and Edinburgh, His American début was as Rocco in Fidelio at the Metropolitan in 1960. His book Lebenszeiten -Ungebetene Briefe was published in Vienna in 1987.

Gerhard Unger was born in 1916 in Bad Salzungen. He studied in Berlin and began singing in the concert hall and in oratorio in 1945. His début as an opera singer in 1947 took place in Weimar in the German Democratic Republic, From 1949 to 1961 Unger sang with the Berlin State Opera but moved to Stuttgart after that time. He also sang at the Hamburg State Opera from 1962 to 1973. From 1951 onwards he sang regularly at the Bayreuth Festival where his interpretation of David from Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg was hugely admired: he recorded the rôle with Herbert von Karajan (1951), Rudolf Kempe (1951), and Rafael Kubelík (1968). Unger appeared at the Salzburg Festival between 1962 and 1978 in addition to singing in Paris, Brussels, London, Turin and Marseilles. His other rôles included Tamino Alfredo and Pinkerton as well as Pedrillo, Jacquino and Mime.

Erich Leinsdorf was born Erich Landauer in Vienna in 1912, and by the age of five was enrolled in a local music school. He studied music at Vienna University and the Vienna Conservatory, making his conducting début at the Musikvereinsaal upon graduation. He became assistant conductor of the

Workers' Chorus in Vienna in 1933, and a year later was appointed Toscanini's assistant at the Salzburg Festival. His American début took place at the Metropolitan Opera conducting Die Walküre on 21st January, 1938, and the following year he became head of the company's German repertoire. After becoming a naturalised American citizen in 1942. Leinsdorf was appointed music director of the Cleveland Orchestra but was soon enlisted into the United States Army. Discharged in 1944, he returned to the Metropolitan, before becoming music director of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in 1947, a post he held until 1955. Seven years later he became music director of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, resigning in 1969. Leinsdorf then conducted opera and concert performances in the United States and Europe for the ensuing two decades. In 1978, he became principal conductor of the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, a post he held until 1980. In 1976, he published a controversial book Cadenza: A Musical Career. a candid memoir of himself and his fellow musicians. He died in Zurich in 1993.

The German tenor Erich Witte was born in Bremen in 1911. Following his début in 1932 in his native city he sang in Wiesbaden and Breslau, and between 1938 and 1939 he was heard in New York as Froh and Mime at the Metropolitan Opera House. He sang David at Bayreuth during the war and in the 1950s appeared as Loge, a rôle he sang subsequently at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London. In 1957 he produced *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* at Covent Garden and sang Walther as a last minute replacement. Witte worked at the Berlin Staatsoper until 1960 and later became a producer there from 1964. Other rôles included Otello, Florestan, and Peter Grimes. In 1970 he created the part of Harry McRae in Alan Bush's opera *Joe Hill*.

The German bass-baritone Michael Bohnen (1887-1965) was born in Berlin, studying with Fritz Steinbach and Schulz-Dornburg. After making his début as Caspar in Weber's *Der Freischütz* in Düsseldorf in 1910, he sang at the Royal Opera in Berlin the following year (where he sang regularly until 1919) before joining the opera at Wiesbaden for the

1912-13 season. His first British appearance was in 1914 at the Theatre Drury Lane season under Beecham, singing Ochs and Sarastro. He also appeared at the Bayreuth Festival later that year. Bohnen's successful American début was at the Metropolitan Opera in March 1923, an occasion which led to him singing in that house for the ensuing ten seasons. Thereafter he sang at the Städtische Oper Berlin from 1933 until 1945, when he became its administrator for two years. His rôles included King Mark, Rocco, Hagen, Wotan, Daland, Hunding, Scarpia and Gurnemanz. He also acted Ochs in the silent film version of *Der Rosenkavalier*, made in 1925.

Conductor Leopold Ludwig (1908-1979) was born in Witkowitz in Moravia. At the age of ten he was a church organist, and studied piano at the Vienna Academy of Music with Emil Paur between 1927 and 1930. He made his conducting début in Opava in 1931. before moving on to Brno and obtaining his first major appointment in 1936 for three seasons as chief conductor of the Oldenburg Opera in northern Germany. Ludwig conducted in Vienna between 1939 and 1943 prior to moving to Berlin to take up a similar position with the Städtische Oper Berlin where he was based from 1943 until 1950. It was, however, the twenty years he spent as chief conductor of the Hamburg State Opera (1950-1971) that is particularly remembered. The company visited the Edinburgh Festival in 1972, giving their British première of Hindemith's Mathis der Maler. Ludwig conducted at the San Francisco Opera in 1958, and appeared at the Glyndebourne Festival in the following year and again in 1966. He made his Metropolitan Opera début in 1970 with Wagner's Parsifal and also appeared at the Vienna State Opera from 1963 onwards. He served as musical adviser to the Basle Symphony Orchestra for the 1969-1970 season. Ludwig was much admired as a fine example of the German Kapellmeister tradition. He also recorded in a variety of capacities for Deutsche Grammophon, EMI, Everest and Urania.

Malcolm Walker

The Barber of Baghdad Synopsis

Act I

The curtain rises on a scene in the House of Nureddin. There is a sofa, on which Nureddin is lving. by its side a table with bottles of medicine. Day is dawning and Nureddin's servants stand by with every sign of distress, as at a deathbed.

Nureddin is in love with Margiana, the Cadi's daughter, and murmurs her name in his sleep, while his anxious servants watch over him

3 The servants go, leaving Nureddin alone. He rises and expresses some wonder that he is still alive. addressing his beloved Margiana, the light of his soul. He recalls the words of Bostana an old relation of the Cadi, who has promised him that his luck will change.

4 Bostana, wearing a grotesque costume, joins him, calling blessings on him and announcing news of Margiana, Nureddin at first takes her for a spirit, about to lead him to Paradise, but soon recognises her as a dove bringing good news.

5 Bostana tells Nureddin that he must meet Margiana while her father is at prayer in the mosque. Nureddin is all for hurrying off at once, but Bostana tells him that there is time now, before midday prayers, to prepare for his meeting, after a bath and shave. She goes, reminding him that she expects a good present.

6 Nureddin, alone, expresses his delight at what is to come

7 The barber Abul Hassan, recommended by Bostana, is summoned to prepare Nureddin for his meeting with Margiana, greeting him effusively, before Nureddin interrupts, with the order to be quick about his task. Abul Hassan assures him that astrologically this is a good time to be shaved, while Nureddin expresses further impatience.

8 The barber chatters on, listing his skills as an academic, doctor, chemist, arithmetician, grammarian, aesthete, rhetorician, tourist and purist, painter and sculptor, fencer and gymnast, and much else. Indignantly he tells Nureddin that he is known in his family for his taciturnity

9 With increasing impatience. Nureddin goes to the door and shouts for his servants, telling them to throw the barber out, but Abul Hassan holds them off with his razor. Nureddin signals to the servants to go, leaving the harber victorious. Now he can set to work

10 It is soon clear to the barber that Nureddin is in love. and Abul Hassan recalls a love-song to his own Margiana, which he sings as he shaves Nureddin.

occasionally diverted from his task

11 Nureddin tells the barber of his own love for his Margiana, explaining that she is the daughter of the Cadi, a villain, Abul adds, who shaves himself. He promises to accompany Nureddin, an offer the latter would rather not accept.

12 Nureddin goes into the next room, to make ready. and Abul Hassan, alone, recalls the difficulties that love has caused each of his brothers

13 Nureddin returns, dressed, but annoved to find the barber still there. Abul Hassan, however, is determined to be helpful. Eventually Nureddin calls again for his servants, telling them that the barber is ill, leaving him in their care

Act II

14 The scene is a woman's chamber in the house of the Cadi Baba Mustapha.

15 Margiana anticipates with delight the coming of her lover. She is joined by Bostana, happily announcing the coming of Nureddin. She is followed by the Cadi himself, holding a letter and a key, equally delighted at the prospect of the arrival of his old friend Selim, to whom he has promised his daughter's hand. Four servants carry in a chest, full of presents from Margiana's suitor. She professes obedience to her father, but secretly seeks assurance from Bostana. The Cadi opens the chest, taking out the precious materials and jewels that Selim has sent. Margiana continues to feign delight to her father, while continuing to confirm with Bostana that all is well

16 The sound of the muezzin is heard and the Cadi leaves for the mosque. As soon as he is away, Bostana ushers in Nureddin and withdraws.

17 Nureddin immediately sings of his love for

Margiana, to which she responds, giving a rose as a token of her love.

18 The lovers are interrupted by the arrival of Abul Hassan at the window, assuring them that he will keep a look-out. Bostana hurries in, telling them that the mad old fellow is singing everywhere of the happiness of love and proclaiming Nureddin's name. Bostana goes out, to keep watch for the Cadi. Nureddin leads Margiana to a seat and kneels before her, while Abul Hassan, at the window, sings his love-song. There is further disturbance as the voice of a slave is heard. punished by the returning Cadi for having broken a vase, arousing agitated cries from Abul Hassan, who thinks Nureddin is being murdered. Bostana tells Nureddin to hide in the chest, into which they put again the lengths of cloth, locking it. Abul Hassan comes in, with four of Nureddin's servants, seeking the corpse of his supposedly murdered friend, to be hurried away by Rostana

19 Abul Hassan laments the death of Nureddin. He tells the servants to carry out the chest, but they are interrupted by the Cadi, who accuses them of theft. The barber, however, accuses the Cadi of murder, the latter shouting 'theft' and the former 'murder'. Friends of the Cadi and other people are now gathering, with women in mourning singing their laments. Abul Hassan tells the men to open the chest, in which he thinks the corpse of Nureddin has been hidden.

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Act II (conclusion)

The tumult has aroused the Caliph, who appears with his attendants, seeking the cause of all this trouble. The Cadi explains that a thief has tried to steal the presents sent for his daughter. Abul Hassan starts his explanation with an excursus into his family history, but eventually is persuaded to give his name, Abul Hassan Ali Ebn Bekar, a barber, adding a summary of his qualifications. Finally he tells the Caliph that the body of his friend, beloved of the Cadi's daughter, lies in the chest, murdered by the Cadi. The latter calls for the key to the chest, and

Nureddin's servants bring the chest back to its original place. Bostana, at a sign from Margiana, goes to open the chest. The Cadi announces the contents as his daughter's treasure, but is confounded when the apparently lifeless body of Nureddin is revealed.

The Cadi thinks he is in a nightmare, calling on him to awake. The Caliph sees here a matter of love, while the barber laments over the supposed corpse, joined by Margiana and Bostana and bystanders. Suddenly Abul Hassan realises that Nureddin is still alive, and the Caliph tells him to apply his healing skills. Abul Hassan moves the people away from Nureddin and sings in his ear his love-song to Margiana. administering smelling salts and applying to his nose the rose that Margiana had given him and which Nureddin was still holding. The Caliph declares that since the Cadi has announced the contents of the chest as his daughter's treasure, so let it be: the lovers should be united. Meanwhile he orders the arrest of Abul Hassan, whose skills he would prove and whose stories he wants to hear

3 The barber starts a song of praise of the Caliph, in which he is joined by the company.

Abu Hassan Synopsis

[5] The story, based on *The Arabian Nights*, tells of the Caliph's cup-bearer Abu Hassan and his loyal wife Fatime.

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Fatime must go to Zobeide, the Caliph's wife, to ask for funeral money for her dead husband. She bids her dead husband farewell and sets off for the palace.

Abu Hassan sings of what he would do with money, entertaining, enjoying himself and lavishing money too on his wife

The door opens, and there stands Omar, the Caliph's money-lender, followed by other creditors, seeking money from Abu Hassan, whose debts have fallen due. Omar is unwilling to wait any longer, but Abu Hassan begs him to be patient, telling him that Fatime has gone to take money from Zobeide and explaining how she admires Omar's generosity and goodness. Omar is ready to help Fatime and deal with Abu Hassan's creditors, who leave with him. Fatime now returns with the funeral money and Abu Hassan tells her that Omar had been there and how he had been fobbed off with suggestions of Fatime's interest in him

At the palace all had been tears, at news of Abu Hassan's death, tears, Fatime says, that are the dew of love. Now, though, Abu Hassan must go to the palace to see the Caliph and tell him of Fatime's death.

10 Left alone, Fatime sings of her love for her husband.

11 Omar seizes the opportunity to return to Abu Hassan's house. Fatime tells him that her husband is with the Caliph, and Omar declares his love for her.

12 He goes on to tell her that he has settled their debts and taken them upon himself, while Fatime fends him off, without destroying all his hopes. Abu Hassan is seen returning, and Fatime pushes him into a cupboard, before her husband can see him. Abu Hassan has been successful with the Calinh, and has been given money

for his wife's funeral. Fatime explains to him what has happened, while out aloud they pretend to quarrel over the locked cupboard. They continue, with Abu Hassan playing the jealous husband, while Omar, in the cupboard, is fearful of discovery. Fatime sees a palace servant approaching, and Abu Hassan tells her to lie down, feet towards Mecca, allowing the messenger to return to the palace with news of Fatime's death, thus letting the Caliph win his bet with Zobeide.

Rôles are reversed with the approach of a second messenger, Zobeide's servant and the narrator in the whole piece, who finds Fatime mourning her husband; she shows the woman her husband's body and is comforted to be told that she is young and pretty and will find another husband.

14 Fatime and Abu Hassan are anxious about the imminent discovery of their ruse, while Omar, still in the cupboard, remains terrified of the jealous husband. Fatime and Abu Hassan feign death. People are heard outside announcing the approach of the Caliph and his wife. The Caliph wonders, in the circumstances, which of the couple died first, and the two servants offer their contradictory accounts. The Caliph offers a thousand gold pieces to anyone who can explain who died first. at which Abu Hassan sits up to claim the reward. brought to life by the Caliph, as, promptly, is Fatime too. They tell the Caliph how Omar has settled their debts and how he made advances to Fatime and is now locked in the cupboard. The Caliph rewards Abu Hassan, and lets Omar sweat for a while in the cupboard.

15 The piece ends with the people praising the Caliph.

Keith Anderson

Schwarzkopf • Czerwenka • Leinsdorf



CORNELIUS

The Barber of Baghdad

(Der Barbier von Bagdad)

Abul Hassan, the Barber	. Oskar Czerwenka
Baba Mustapha, the Cadi	Gerhard Unger
Margiana, his daughter Eli	sabeth Schwarzkopf
Bostana, his maid-servant	Grace Hoffman
Nureddin, in love with Margiana	Nicolai Gedda
The Caliph of Baghdad	Hermann Prey

Philharmonia Chorus and Orchestra Erich Leinsdorf

Recorded 11th-12th and 14th-15th May, 1956, in the Town Hall, Watford, and in EMI Abbey Road Studio No. I, London

8.111337-38

ADD MONO

Playing Time 2:15:44

CD I	78:26
1-13 Act I	52:26
14-19 Act II (beginning)	26:00
CD 2	57:18
1-4 Act II (conclusion)	20:21
5-15 Carl Maria von WEBER (I	786 - 1826)
Abu Hassan	36:57
Fatime Elisabeth Sch	warzkopf
Abu Hassan Ei	ich \A/itta

Omar Michael Bohnen

Berlin Radio Symphony Chorus and Orchestra • Leopold Ludwig

Recorded in Berlin in 1944

When this recording of Peter Cornelius's sparkling German comedy Der Barbier von Bagdad was released in 1957, The Gramophone reviewer remarked that "there is no mistaking the enjoyment which the cast find in the work - an enjoyment seemingly shared by the orchestra and the chorus... Outstanding in this company is Oskar Czerwenka, who very obviously relished the verbal humour in his part and gives a splendid comic performance... Nicolai Gedda is on his best form, and Schwarzkopf brings distinction to [her] part". The 1944 recording of Weber's delightful one-act Singspiel Abu Hassan, based on The Arabian Nights, features Elisabeth Schwarzkopf and Erich Witte as "a very melodious pair of lovers, Michael Bohnen revels in his buffo part, and Leopold Ludwig keeps the little opera moving briskly" (The Gramophone, July 1961).

Reissue Producer and Restoration Engineer: Mark Obert-Thorn Special thanks to Maynard F. Bertolet for providing source material Cover photo: Elisabeth Schwarzkopf (Private Collection)

